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TOWN OF NEWTOWN

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

October 13, 2020

Dear Newtown residents,

Last evening I was invited to attend a Virtual Town Hall discussion with Congresswoman Hayes and Newtown residents. Minutes into the meeting the conversation was "Zoom bombed" by a person(s) who voiced and posted racial epithets directed at the Congresswoman. The responsible party was promptly removed and amazingly the Congresswoman carried on as though nothing had happened. This act of overt racism left me feeling uncomfortable and angry.

As I learned from the Anti Defamation League after the vandalism incident at Congregation Adath Israel last summer, it is always best not to reference what was said or posted as it is like catnip to the hateful for their handiwork to be seen. That being said, we cannot treat these events like the proverbial tree falling in the woods, as failure to respond creates space for acts of hate to grow and multiply.

Our politics may be sharply divided but our common decency should unite us. Racism has no home anywhere and if we do not speak out in disgust when it happens to a high profile individual, who will speak out when it happens to our neighbors, our friends or, most importantly, our children?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Rosenthal", is written over the printed name.

Daniel C. Rosenthal
First Selectman